

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

May 30, 2001

LB 451

tax savings to the people in Sarpy County, but it's also the right thing to do. Putting kids in a detention center overnight, and in many of your cases, it's not even close to where their families are, there aren't that many detention centers around the state. Taking up police time to drive the person there, bring them home, interrupting their school, exposing them to things that they probably wouldn't have been exposed to in their life by being locked up overnight in one of these centers. This is not the way policy should be in Nebraska and we found this, and spent a lot of time talking about those issues last year and that's why the bill passed because we need consistent, appropriate decision-making regarding detention. It's a cost savings, but it's also the right thing to do for kids. So we decided there should be change. And change is difficult. But change needs to happen if we're going to have a juvenile justice system that works appropriately in the state. And one of those key decisions, the key recommendation of the county officials' plan that was written by Karen Chinn, said we need to have an intake screening for the kids who go in detention for the appropriate screening. And so that's what this committee has been working on for months. That's where this bill came from. It was out of the bill from last year. I guess my concern is, if we were going to ask 28 people from across the state to take their...

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: One minute.

SENATOR THOMPSON: ...time to come in, if we were going to pay for a consultant for that group to develop this bill, to get to the screening instrument, if the Governor opposed that, the bill last year should have been vetoed. The bill last year was not vetoed. This is the accompanying bill, the implementation of what we said. What will happen if we don't do this? We will have no way to complete all the intake assessment tools that need to be done, and it's going to fall back on the judges. As the bill is written, this will be a product that needs to be completed by juvenile probation officers around the state. And if we don't do it, it's going to fall back to judges, and they can't just make a call in the middle of the night, and say put them in detention. They were going...they are going to have to use the same instrument because we put that in law. This is not